

# IOWA BIRD LIFE



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## Notes Of Birds In The Davenport Area

THOMAS J. MORRISSEY

DAVENPORT

LINE DRAWINGS BY E. W. STEFFEN

CEDAR RAPIDS

### PART III OWLS

#### BARN OWL

A very rare resident.

There are two records of this species in the Davenport area. A male was taken from the belfry of St. Katherine's School, Davenport, on April 15, 1935. This specimen is now in the Davenport Public Museum. Another specimen, a male, was taken from the belfry of the First Presbyterian Church at Kirkwood Boulevard and Iowa Street, Davenport, on November 5, 1949. (A dead Barn Owl was found at Duck Creek Park Jan. 12, 1952, by Morrissey. A female with eggs in the oviduct was killed at the old Scott County Courthouse. One was seen and photographed March 7, 1960 at Le Claire Park by Lewis Blevins, Edwin Meyer and Peter Petersen. Two pairs nested in Davenport in the summer of 1967, both fledging young. One of the young was recovered Jan. 9, 1968 near Burnside, Louisiana. ed).

#### SCREECH OWL

A fairly common resident.

Screech Owls are noted during every month of the year. During the late fall, winter, and early spring very few were recorded because the owls were silent in those seasons and like all owls they were so secretive and hid themselves so well during the day that it was only by accident that they were met with during the usual field trips. I was unable to discover when nesting activities began. About the first week of May, however, Screech Owls began to appear more frequently in the early evening. Often they were reported threatening people who had unknowingly trespassed near their nest. The frequency with which owls were reported in late spring was obviously due to the increased activity and boldness of the parent owls in seeking food and defending their young. Schaefer found downy young of an unknown age in a nest cavity near Duck Creek Park April 27, 1949. One downy bird with small primaries but unable to fly was found at the foot of an elm containing a nest cavity on the St. Ambrose College campus on May 28, 1959. Three young, still very downy but able to fly well, were seen June 10, 1943 and three more on June 12, 1949. Between the extreme dates of late April and mid June non-flying, downy young were recorded on 10 occasions. Three nesting cavities, all in elm trees, were located.

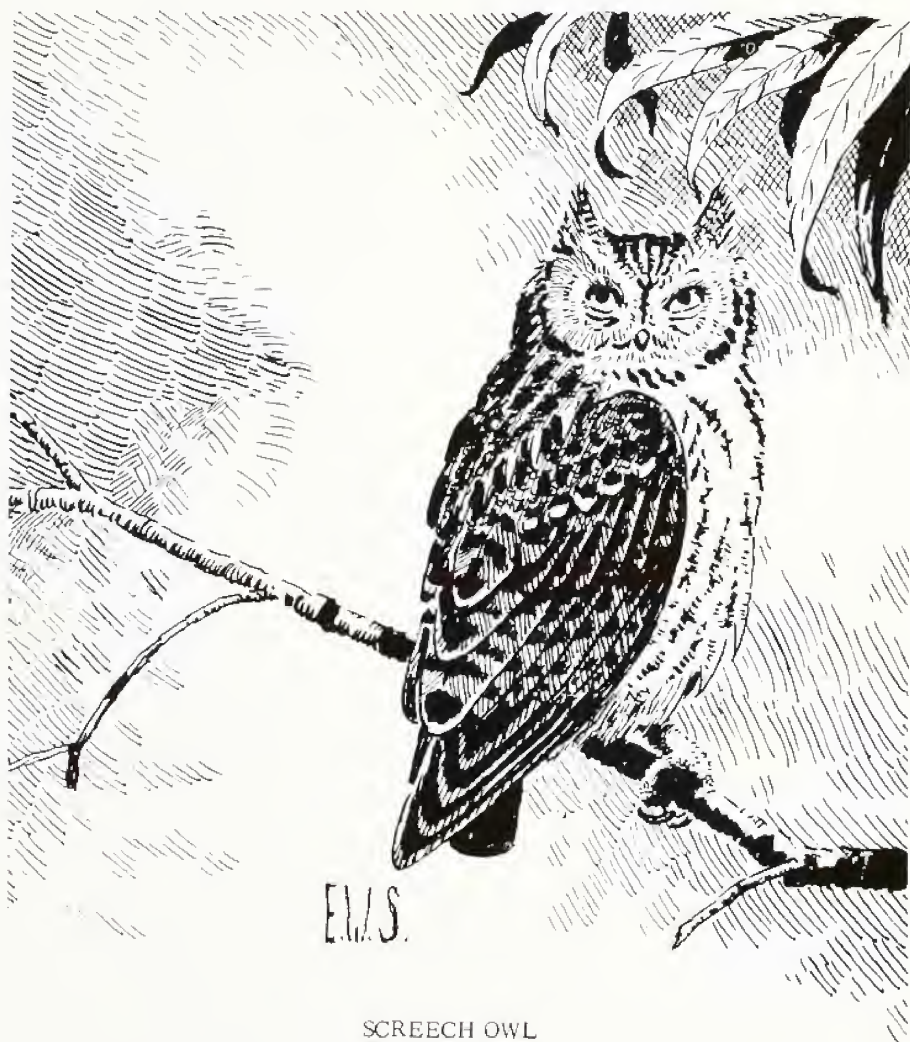
After the young were fully feathered and independent the Screech Owls began to call frequently. Usually this calling began about the end of June and continued through September for two or three hours after night fall and just before dawn.





BARN OWL

Their mournful whistling was one of the most characteristic sounds of the still, hot summer evenings. Perhaps their calling was influenced by temperature for they called continually during the unseasonably warm, summer-like evenings and mornings of October, 1950, although in other years they were rarely heard from mid-September to May. During the summer Screech Owls could easily be decoyed by a whistled imitation of their notes and I sometimes lured as many as four at one time within a few yards of me. It was my impression that these owls were solitary except during the breeding season. I never saw more than one owl at a time. I never heard one owl answer another except over a considerable distance. I never heard the voice of more than one owl in the same vicinity except



SCREECH OWL

when I decoyed them to me and then they arrived at well spaced intervals suggesting that some of them had flown from a distance. (Also easily decoyed by a tape recorder, ed).

Screech Owls were probably more numerous in the eastern half of the city of Davenport than anywhere else in the area. They found their nesting cavities in the many large shade trees that lined the streets and they hunted mice, birds, and insect in the occasional ravines and about the parks and lawns of that part of the city. They were often seen at night along county roads particularly north of Davenport where many of the old farms were surrounded by large soft maples (*ACER SACCARHINUM*). They were absent from the extensive lowland forests of the area probably because of the presence of many Barred Owls in those districts. I did not find this species in the few upland forests of the area although the

owls were probably present there in numbers at least equal to those of the city. During the daytime Screech Owls hid in nest cavities, in tangles of grape vine on trees and shrubs and in evergreens. (Found on 16 of 18 Christmas Counts with a maximum of seven. ed).

I examined six or seven pellets of this species. They contained bones of some unidentified passerine bird and skulls of wood mice (*PEROMYSCUS*). Small birds were always very much excited by the presence of Screech Owls.

### GREAT HORNED OWL

A rare resident. (Now an uncommon resident. ed).

During the course of the investigation, I recorded Horned Owls on only six occasions. Four of these records were of birds in the lowland forests along the Mississippi near Princeton or along the Wapsipinicon: one was of an individual in the city of Davenport; another was recorded in the upland woods along Spencer Creek near the Davenport Country Club. In addition to these few records the species was noted rather frequently in the extensive white oak-hickory woodlands in the northwest corner of Scott County, about five miles west of the western border of the area covered in this study.

Although I have called this species a "resident", I doubt very much whether any nested in the Davenport area. The only extensive woodlands in the area were the lowland forest in the northeast corner of the area above Princeton and the strips of varying width along the Wapsipinicon. I met with many Barred Owls at all seasons in the lowland forests but only on the four occasions mentioned did I see Horned Owls. I did not observe any direct competition between the two species but it seems unlikely that two forms with such similar food requirements could exist amicably in the limited territory available to them. The relatively large numbers of the weaker and less aggressive Barred Owl suggested that Horned Owls were absent. Probably the few Horned Owls recorded were individuals which had drifted into the area after the nesting season since all were observed in fall and early winter. (Apparently overlooked due to the lack of hiking by the author. During the 1967 breeding season they nested at Pine Hill Cemetery. Horned Owls have not increased in the last twenty years. ed).

Horned Owls were formerly much more numerous. Wilson's journals of 1884 to 1900 contain many references to this species which he encountered in the upland forest of the area. The continued cutting of the small acreage of upland forest, the increase in population and the accompanying increase in hunters, the increased accessibility of wild areas which followed the introduction of automobiles and the building of roads--all these changes made the continued existence of these owls as nesting birds impossible in such a highly developed agricultural and urban region as the Davenport area. Perhaps the most important reason for its extermination as a breeding bird lay in the birds' habits. They were courageous in defense of their nests and young and were at all seasons bold and unafraid. Lesser owls fled the approach of humans. Horned Owls stood their ground and sometimes behaved in a threatening manner even when they did not have young. The number killed by hunters and farmers was all out of proportion to the abundance of this species as compared with other owls. A seven and one quarter pound female killed along the Wapsipinicon on October 29, 1949 had eaten a cottontail rabbit (*SYLVILAGUS*). The plumage of this specimen had a very strong skunk odor. (Of interest for a resident species is the fact that both of





GREAT HORNED OWL

the Scott County banding recoveries which were not recovered where banded moved northeast. One moved twenty miles to Geneseo, Illinois in one year, one moved 100 miles to Byron, Illinois in five years. ed).



## SNOWY OWL

A very rare late fall or winter visitor.

During the fall and winter of 1949-1950 there was a spectacular invasion of Iowa by Snowy Owls. Nineteen (verified) were reported in IOWA BIRD LIFE (Vol XX, No. 1, March, 1949). There were apparently only two records for the



Davenport area. One was killed by a hunter near Davenport and was prepared at the Museum of Natural History of the State University of Iowa. A second Snowy Owl was seen December 14, 1949, as it perched on the roof of Davenport High School. This owl remained on the roof until 4:00 PM when it flew off and was not seen again. It was seen by hundreds of people during the day but showed no concern at the crowd of students below its perch. Occasionally it turned its head to follow the flight of pigeons which roosted about the building. There are a number of specimens of this owl in the Davenport Public Museum and in private collections. None of these mounted birds are with any data although undoubtedly some were collected in the Davenport area in past years. Wilson did not record this bird between 1884 and 1906. (Many records since this writing, including two Christmas Count records. ed).

### BARRED OWL

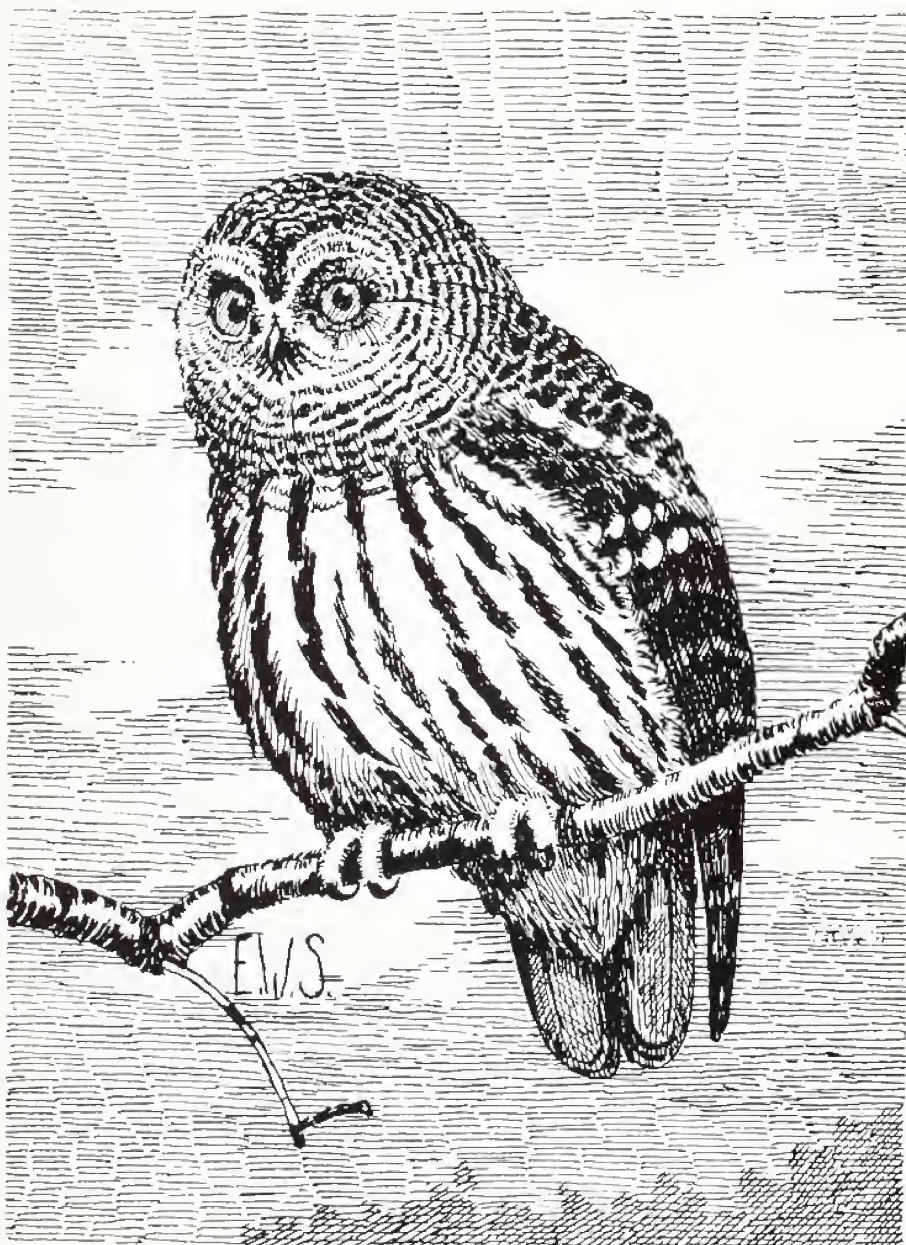
A fairly common permanent resident.

The Barred Owl was found only in lowland forests or in forests of the upland type which were more or less continuous with the lowland forests on the bluffs of river valleys. In this particular habitat from one to eight could be recorded on each field trip. The greatest number were always seen in early May when adults with their newly fledged families were conspicuous in the partially leafed woodlands, especially on foggy or overcast mornings.

I believe that there were two pair of these owls nesting at Credit Island, although during the winter only two individuals were usually present. I found no nests but I recorded young owls on three occasions at Credit Island: one downy young with no feathers on April 20, 1946; one downy young with small primaries on April 26, 1948 and April 27, 1950. Three young with small primaries and scapular tracts well developed but not able to fly were found near McCausland, May 8, 1949.

These owls were heard hooting in all months but their calling was most often heard in March and again in August. On March nights or on cloudy days four or five owls could always be heard calling and answering one another at Credit Island, from the timber across from the island and from the Illinois shore. They were also heard frequently along the Wapsipinicon, on the islands and bottomland forest of the Mississippi above Princeton, and rarely in the scattered upland forest remnants on the bluffs of the Mississippi between Davenport and Princeton. On three occasions they were seen in the city of Davenport. During the daytime these owls hid in leafy tangles of grape vine and woodbine. In the winter they often perched on or near bunches of dried leaves which still remained on oak trees and were quite perfectly camouflaged until they took flight. They were seldom attacked with persistency by Blue Jays and Crows. Their tormentors usually lost interest in the owl after a few half-hearted attacks. Long-eared Owls, Screech Owls, and Great Horned Owls were attacked more vigorously.

I examined six pellets of this species, each of which contained the skull of a White-footed Mouse (*PEROMYSCUS*) which were very abundant in all lowland forests. Hodges (1947) has called attention to the fish-eating habits of this species in the Davenport area. (Recorded on 17 or 18 Christmas Counts in the Davenport



BARRED OWL

area with a maximum number of 17. In the winter of 1952-53 and 1953-54 forty-three pellets from roosts on Credit Island were examined by Petersen. These contained the remains of at least six fish, 23 White-footed Mice, 5 Norway Rats, 4 Meadow Mice, one Short-tailed Shrew and one Rabbit and one crayfish. ed).





LONG-EARED OWL

An uncommon spring and fall migrant and winter resident.

Hard to see how Morrissey omitted this bird. Roosts were found by him



during the period of this work (Morrissey, 1949-1951). Recorded on 15 of 18 Christmas Counts. Earliest fall date October 29, 1964, and latest March 3, 1966, both banding records. ed).



#### SHORT-EARED OWL

A rare spring and fall migrant and winter resident.

The only records of this species in the Davenport area during the course of

the study were: November 28, 1949, a female shot in a corn field near McCausland while rabbit hunting. This bird flushed from beneath a few bent-over stalks of corn in a field which had been picked. It's stomach was empty. November 11, 1941, four flushed from under a thicket of willows around a small pond on the golf course of the Davenport Country Club. November 29, 1949, four observed at duck along Middle Road north of Bettendorf. (Hazard) January 7, 1950, one observed along country road near Eldridge. (Schaefer). April 7, 1949, 14 flushed from under willows in southeast corner of the Princeton Marsh. (Hazard).

I saw Short-eared Owls more frequently in other parts of Iowa and Illinois, especially where there were extensive marshes and wet meadows. The scarcity of records for the Davenport area is probably no true index of this owl's numbers but rather a reflection of its habits. They hunt and roost in picked corn fields and sedge meadows normally have a small population of birds at the seasons that the owls are likely to be present and are therefore not often visited by bird students. Probably if I had explored such habitats sufficiently between November and April I would have found more of these birds. (Seen on 14 of 18 Christmas Counts with a maximum of 16 birds. Most often found by checking the optimum habitat just at dusk. ed).



SAW-WHET OWL.

## SAW-WHET OWL

A very rare visitor, (also a rare migrant. ed).

In the winter of 1937 some friends showed me a tiny owl perched about four feet from the ground in a pine tree in their yard near Prospect Park in Davenport. This little owl was very tame and allowed us to come within a few feet of it. I was not particularly interested in birds at that time and it was not until some years later that I realized that this must have been a Saw-whet Owl. Wilson recorded this species three times: February 2, 1889; April 2, 1890; and March 21, 1891. All these observations were at Pine Hill Cemetery in Davenport which at that time was "unimproved" and covered with tall grass, shrubs and weeds. In addition to the many conifers which are still present the entire cemetery was surrounded by a dense hedge of Osage Orange. There is a specimen taken in Scott County in the Museum of Natural History of the State University of Iowa. (In ten years of fall banding at least one was caught each year and a total of 75 have been banded. Dates range from October 5 to December 8, with a maximum catch of five on Oct. 12, 1963. The peak flight usually occurs from October 12 to November 5. None has repeated more than 8 days after banding. Seen only once on a Christmas Count, indicating it is chiefly a migrant. It should be noted that in the ten years of banding at Pine Hill no Saw-whets were ever found in a roost or seen not in a net until 1968 when one was captured in a Riverdale garage by a student of Mrs. Peter Petersen. ed).

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## Some Food Habits Of The Great Horned Owl In Northeastern Missouri

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The purpose of this study is to record some food habits of the Great Horned Owl, *BUBO VIRGINIANUS*, in northeastern Missouri. I wish to thank Dr. D. A. Rosebery, head of the division of science, Northeast Missouri State College, Kirksville, for his assistance in developing this paper; Dr. J. D. Black, Northeast Missouri State College, Kirksville, for the use of reference material; and my wife, Glinda Crawford, for her help in collecting the data for this study and for her clerical assistance.

### METHODS AND MATERIALS

A total of 242 Great Horned Owl pellets were collected from six places in northeastern Missouri during the months of May and June, 1968. They were found to contain 311 skulls of small rodents and identifiable bones of rabbits or birds. The number of rabbits was estimated from the amount and kinds of bones found in the pellets, but the Craigheads (1956) point out that the calculated number of large prey in raptor pellets is subject to some error due to the destruction and digestion of bones.

Table 1. The species taken and the number of times recorded in the examination of 242 Great Horned Owl pellets.

SPECIES	NUMBER OF TIMES RECORDED
MICROTUS OCHROGASTER (Prairie Vole) . . . . .	185
SYNAPTOMYS COOPERI (Southern Bog Lemming) . . . . .	63
SYLVILAGUS FLORIDANUS (Eastern Cottontail) . . . . .	23
PEROMYSCUS MANICULATUS (Deer Mouse) and PEROMYSCUS	
LEUCOPUS (White-footed Mouse) . . . . .	14
REITHRODONTOMYS MEGALOTIS (Western Harvest Mouse) . . . . .	11
RATTUS NORVEGICUS (Norway Rat) . . . . .	4
MUS MUSCULUS (House Mouse) . . . . .	3
Unidentifiable birds . . . . .	3
STURNELLA MAGNA (Eastern Meadowlark) . . . . .	2
MICROTUS PINETORUM (Pine Vole) . . . . .	1
Crayfish . . . . .	1
CITELLUS TRIDECIMLINEATUS (Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel) . . . . .	1
TOTAL . . . . .	311

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Rodents proved to be the most available food source for the owls studied. Of the total food items, 185 specimens were Prairie Voles, and 63 were Southern Bog Lemmings. These two together comprised approximately 80% of the total. The next three in order of occurrence were the Eastern Cottontail, the white-footed mice, and the Western Harvest Mouse. These comprised about 15% of the total. Due to the similarity of the White-footed Mouse and the Deer Mouse, I was unable to distinguish between them. In this study both species are lumped under the heading of the white-footed mice.

Despite the accusations that the Great Horned Owl is the "bad egg" among the owls, it plays its role well in predator-prey relationships and is important in game management (Leopold, 1933). It is interesting to note that no evidence of chickens or other domestic birds was found in this study, although they were available in all six areas. If the chickens were housed properly, they would seldom be preyed on by the Great Horned Owl (Black, 1954).

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## Sashay To Your Corners Sharp-Tail Style

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Have you ever witnessed a dance contest in which only males participate? My wife and I had an opportunity to see such an event at daybreak west of Higgins Lake, Michigan on May 31, 1953. At the time I vowed to return another year and take pictures of the event, the dance of the Sharp-tailed Grouse. But graduate school and teaching in Iowa hindered a return trip until this year.

On May 9th Paul Schneider, a cartographer in the Department of Resource Development at Michigan State University, and I loaded up my camper and headed toward Higgins Lake. The Superintendent of the Conservation School at Higgins Lake told us a forest fire had swept the area the day before and probably went through the grouse territory. We decided to look over the area and see if the grouse dancing grounds had been spared. The sickening sight of the burned over area plus the pungent smell of the charred remains of burned trees was enough to make a person ill. After driving through two or three miles of the burned landscape, we were delighted to see that the fire had not reached the sand road that leads to the dancing ground.

The road through the trees and brush was a Jeep trail so it was a problem getting the camper through. By observing feathers and droppings we located the dancing ground on the sand plains. Camp was set up and a crude blind was built before supper. Cameras were loaded, equipment was checked, and a final inspection of the blind and surrounding area was made. About 1:00 a.m. I woke up with a start and these thoughts ran through my mind: "It is so light!" "What time is it?" "Is the forest fire near?" "Have we slept through the dance?" A quick check out the window disclosed an almost full moon reflecting off the frost on the ground and the brush making it almost as light as day. Back to the sleeping bag until the alarm clock went off at 3:30 a.m.

It was a cold, frosty morning of less than 32 degrees F. outside. We asked each other who is crazy enough to give up a warm sleeping bag to go outside and sit in the cold to look at some crazy mixed up bird that starts dancing before sun up? By now we had downed a cup of hot coffee and both agreed that we were that kind of person. We discussed the grouse and looked outside, the moon was down and it was so dark we couldn't see the blind. We gave the equipment a final check and sat down in the camper ready to move out at a moments notice.

"Listen, here they are!" We stumbled out of the camper into the darkness and felt our way to the blind. We could hear the birds on the dancing ground but it was so dark we couldn't see a thing. We fumbled around trying to set up equipment. Peering out from the blind we could faintly see a stump and only hear the birds. I started the tape recorder and let it run until it was light enough to take two quick pictures. Then the birds flew. We waited and waited but the birds didn't return. A half hour went by and the sun was starting to come up and still no grouse. I started the tape recorder to see if it picked up the sounds of the grouse when they were on the dancing grounds. We were standing in the open discussing our bad luck when the grouse flew back in and tried to find the tape recorder. Paul dove into the blind and I jumped into the cab of the truck as the Sharptail grouse returned to the dancing ground, they gave off with a "chug-a-lug" sound. Each cock seems to set up his own territory. If another cock comes too close the spike tail goes up, the head goes down, and the wings are extended as he charges the intruder. The bird stomps and shakes the stiff spines in the tail which make a rattling sound. The two males charge and retreat and only occasionally engage in body contact. After sparring around they may squat on the ground for a while. As we observed the antics of the birds I shot a dozen black and white pictures and had just picked up the camera containing color film when the birds flew. We rewound the tape and started it. Again the birds returned and I took a dozen pictures in color. The birds flew again just as it was



getting light enough to take good pictures. This time the tape recorder could not induce them to return. By now we were chilled to the bone. Our teeth were chattering as we climbed into the heated camper for another cup of coffee. We rejoiced at our good fortune to have remembered at the last minute to bring a tape recorder from school.

After hiking around, getting stuck in the sand, and photographing the remains of the burned over land, we ate lunch among the jack pines and looked for Kirtland's Warblers. The jack pines in this area were too large now for the Kirtland's but we did see a Prairie Warbler and some Chipping and Clay-colored Sparrows.



SHARP-TAILED GROUSE DISPLAY

Photos by the author

A stop at a remote swamp revealed a Bald Eagle and some Osprey nests. A man who was on his way to check an Osprey nest for any new eggs came by in a boat. He invited me to join him. I was able to get pictures of 3 eggs in the nest. As we were about to leave the area three bus loads of college students were descending into the adjacent areas. This was too much! Birders by the hundreds. We headed for home hoping the pictures would be as good as the time we had in trying to take them.

Some notes about the current status of Sharp-tailed Grouse in Michigan. The Upper Peninsula of Michigan has the largest population of Sharp-tailed Grouse in the state. In 1963 forty-one active dancing grounds were checked and 406 birds were counted. This did not represent the total dancing grounds or birds found in the U. P. The population remained about the same for several years but in 1965 there was a significant drop after the hunting season. In 1966 some of the areas were closed to hunting.

In the Lower Peninsula the count on the dancing grounds in 1956 was 50 birds. In 1961 one hundred twenty birds were found. After an open hunting season in 1961 only 62 cocks were counted in the spring of 1962. In 1963 ninety-three cocks were counted and in 1964 about 100 birds were counted. As the Sharptail areas become covered with larger trees and taller brush the population falls. The Conservation Department has removed or controlled the undesirable vegetation by controlled burning, aerial spraying with herbicides, and by selective cutting in an effort to maintain an area that would be attractive to Sharptails. The cost involved in the habitat improvement program may force a reduction in the number of areas that can be managed for Sharptails. If this happens the Sharp-tailed Grouse will disappear. The future of this species of bird in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan does not appear very bright.

## FIELD REPORTS



The shorebird migration seems to have had little attention with only a few comments received with the notes on the summer season, and scattered references to individual rarities in the migration reports. The warbler migration was generally thought poor in most sections, the Davenport area being the exception. There are few generalizations regarding the sparrows and finches, most remarks being limited to the more unusual items. The waterfowl, as of 28 October, have either gone through, or are later than usual, to judge from the reports.

The most interesting comments are those concerning the Red-breasted Nuthatch and the Purple Finch, both of which were very scarce last winter. Three Common Redpolls banded by Peter Petersen are also noteworthy.



GREBES, PELICANS, HERONS. There have been very few Pied-billed (DH), but good numbers have been seen at Des Moines. Three flocks of 50-75 White Pelicans were observed in the last half of September (DH), and 250 on 6 September (DG), with one flock of 15 reported at the Des Moines Res. on 21 October. Great Blue Herons appear unusually numerous: fairly large numbers at Goose Lake on 15 August (JF); best numbers for some time, with 29 on 22 September and 22 on 29 September while the Kirkpatricks and Davisons saw 90 on 8 September at Blue and Badger Lakes (DH); many for about a month (JK); and, good numbers in September (RM). The only additional Little Blue Heron reported was at Goose Lake on 15 August (JF). A Common Egret seen near Elma on 7 September (RH) is the only mention. There were a number of Black-crowned Night Herons on Goose Lake on 15 August, but there was no nesting colony due to the lake having been drawn down (JF). For the first time in 8 years there were no Yellow-crowned Night Herons at Goose Lake (JF). On 20 and 21 July two were seen at Brenton's Slough near Des Moines, but no nest was found.

GEESE, DUCKS. The goose migration appears to have been concentrated in the last few days of September. The first Canadas, a flock of 30, were seen at Blue Lake on the 26th, and only 3,000 Blues, Snows, and Canadas stayed there with 30,000 at DeSoto Bend according to Supt. Rasmussen. Goose hunting was the poorest in years, although there was one flock of 40 White-fronted seen by Wayne Jensen (DH). There were numerous flocks on 28-30 September (DG). The Red Rock Refuge had 400 Canadas early in October as reported by Supt. Beamer (GB). The Blue and Snow migration started on 28 September and continued with birds moving back and forth between Forney's Lake and Squaw Creek Refuge (EG). An early Black Duck was seen on 29 September (RH). Ducks were moving in fair numbers on 18 October (RM), but all other reports complained of their scarcity (DH, JK, DG, PK, WHB). Blue-winged Teal were unusually scarce (FK).

HAWKS, VULTURES. From the last week in September to the third week in October there was a spectacular Turkey Vulture migration at the Red Rock Refuge, with well over 400 seen (GB). Bill Lonacker saw 15 on 10 October east of Tama (PP). On 20 October there was an average of 1 hawk per mile seen on a 150-mile trip. Red-tailed, Sparrow, Marsh and Rough-legged were identified (RM). A very similar description of a trip from Omaha to Des Moines a few days later was given (JB). There were several reports of Sharp-shinned including 14 on 22 September and 15 on 19 October (RH), while 14 were banded (PP). Lewis Blevins reported a good flight of Cooper's on 11-13 September (PP). Red-shouldered are again missing from the reports, but Red-tailed are commonly mentioned; 10 seen on 20 October, and 46 plus 1 Rough-legged observed four days later by Mary Lou Petersen (PP). A total of 36 Broad-winged was seen on 22 September (RH), while 200 were seen on the morning of 23 September at the Saylorville Dam overlook (JB). There were a few scattered reports of Swainson's. There was a significant increase of Marsh Hawks (EB), and 1 and 2 were seen several times in September and October (DG). Ospreys likewise seem to have been somewhat more numerous than usual. A Peregrine was seen on the Des Moines River near Boone on 29 September (JF), and a falcon appearing to be this species was seen on 21 September to pick a Pectoral Sandpiper off of the drained bed of Rock Creek Lake (AB). The only Pigeon Hawk reported was seen in September (EB).



BOBWHITES, PHEASANTS. There were thought lots of Bobwhites (KL), and very abundant (DG). Pheasants were scarce (KL), and more than last year, but fewer than average (EB).

SHOREBIRDS. Only small numbers of Coots (DH), but several hundred seen on 10 October (FK). Despite the low water at Goose Lake there were few peeps, but lots of Yellowlegs and Dowitchers (FJ). Few shorebirds other than Killdeer (DH). A Golden Plover was seen on 14 September at Dunbar Slough (FJ), and 80 on 12 October at Sage Sanctuary (RH). On the late date of 21 September Ruddy Turnstones were at Rock Creek Lake (AB). A Woodcock was seen 19 October at Klinger (RH). A Western Sandpiper was netted on 2 September at Goose Lake (JF). For Buff-breasted Sandpipers were watched on 8 September (EB). Marbled Godwit were at Goose Lake on 29 August and 3 September (JF).

GULLS, TERNS, CUCKOOS. Few Ring-bellied Gulls and no terns were seen (DH). Hundreds of Franklin's Gulls, mostly immatures were seen on 22 October (EG), and on 5 October there are said to have been thousands in northwest Iowa (RM). As was the case during the summer, there have been few, if any, of either cuckoo species (DH, KL, EB, WHB).

OWLS, WHIP-POOR-WILLS, NIGHTHAWKS, KINGFISHERS. There were 2 Long-eared and 2 Saw-whet Owls at Ames on 24 October (JF). Sixteen Saw-whets were banded from 11 October-10 November (PP). A Short-eared was seen 16 October (JK). A Whip-poor-will was reported on 5 September (DH), and 2 were caught at Springbrook (JF, PP). A migration of 175-200 Nighthawks was noticed on 20 September (PP). Mrs. Vellie and Mrs. Hewitt saw 10 Kingfishers on 6 September at Sweet's Marsh (RH).

WOODPECKERS, FLYCATCHERS. Unusually large numbers of Yellow-shafted Flickers were seen in the last 10 days in October in Des Moines. A Red-shafted Flicker was observed on 13 September (EB), and a hybrid was banded and photographed on 11 October (PP). Say's Phoebe's had the lowest population in years (EB). The last of 58 Yellow-bellied Flycatchers was banded on the rather late date of 22 September (PP). Olive-sided Flycatchers were banded 8 and 9 September and the late date of 20 October (PP).

BLUE JAYS, NUTHATCHES, WRENS. There was a good movement of Blue Jays from 24 to 28 September (PP). Red-breasted Nuthatches, which began to appear in August, continue to come in: 2 on 29 September (RH); on the same date, 1 (RM) and 2 (PL). They are said to be more this year on the Ames campus (JF), and there have been several Des Moines reports. A flight occurred on 11 October, and 32 have been banded (PP). A news report from Knoxville, Tenn. mentioned a total of 120 found on their fall count whereas their previous high was 34 in 1963. A late House Wren was banded on 18 October (PP). Winter Wrens were found, 3 on each of the 12th and 19th of October (RH). A Carolina Wren was seen at Summer on 12 October (RH), and several were singing in mid-September (FK). On 12 October 2 Long-billed Marsh Wrens were found with migrant sparrows (DH).

THRUSHES. Robins were thought not plentiful although 30 were seen on 21

October (GB), but they have been unusually numerous in Des Moines, and hundreds were seen in Graceland Cemetery on 2 September (GM). Other thrushes of the *HYLOCICHLA* genus were missed almost entirely except at Davenport where 120 Swainson's, 17 Gray-cheeked, and 17 Veeries, among others, were banded (PP). One Swainson's was seen (DH), and none at all (GB, WHB). From 3 to 15 Bluebirds were seen daily (GB), with many at Red Rock Refuge, and 150 were counted on the afternoon of 12 October in Hamilton and Webster Cos. (RM).

**KINGLETS, PIPITS, SHRIKES.** Kinglets, presumably Ruby-crowned, were thought in good numbers (JK, PK, GB), and more than 400 Ruby-crowned were banded (PP). Between 12 and 17 October 6 Water Pipits were seen (DG), with 1 on 12 October at the Sage Sanctuary (RH). Shrikes were few with only 3 seen (GB).

**VIREOS.** A Solitary Vireo banded on 19 October was rather late, while the first Philadelphia Vireo on 27 August was very early. The peak of the Red-eyed migration was on 20 and 21 September with the last seen on the 24th (PP).

**WARBLERS.** These are the comments on the Warbler migration: commoner species about a week late (JF); very poor (DH); few seen and no waves (JK); very few except Myrtles (GB, PK); good variety, no large numbers of any (KL); not enough to make any comment (EB); poorest yet in Des Moines. However, there were waves on 25 September and 6 and 7 October (FK), and a very good movement on 20 September (PP). The following dates and numbers are from the Petersen banding records unless otherwise specified. Black-and-white, last banded on the late date of 12 October. Only 57 Tennessee banded, a small number. Orange-crowned were relatively higher with 43. Nashville were low with 53; the last being on 21 October. Other late sightings were 20 October (GB) and 23 October (WHB). A Magnolia on 29 August was early, while one on 12 October was late (RM). A Cape May on 10 September was early, while another on 23 October was quite late. The scarce Black-throated Blue was banded on 6 October. In late August 4 were banded at Jefferson (JF). Black-throated Green were early on 2 September, as was a Blackburnian on 27 August. Northern Waterthrushes were few with only 27 banded. Mourning were early on 14 August and late on 28 September. Yellowthroat, Wilson's and Canada were low.

**ICTERIDS, FINCHES.** An Eastern Meadowlark on 13 October at Blue Lake was a "first" from that area (DH). Very large flocks of mixed blackbirds had unusually large numbers of Yellow-headed Blackbirds estimated as about 1 to 20 or 30 (DH). The sparrow migration was thought very good (JK), but poor (GB). Ten species were seen on 19 October (RH). Cardinals have not been seen since early spring (DH). Indigo Buntings were scarce with only 2 banded (PP). Purple Finches, scarce last year, are reported (RH, DH, PL, PP). One seen on 6 September by Mrs. Velie and Mrs. Hewitt was early. A Common Redpoll banded on 25 October was a "first" besides being 10 days earlier than the previous record for the area (PP). Two Pine Siskins were banded 26 October and two more Redpolls 27 October (PP). Juncos were thought scarce (PK) and were late in arriving at Des Moines. Clay-colored were banded for the first time since 1961, one on 10 October being late (PP). White-throated came in the first week-end in October and have been in unusually large numbers (DH), but are



thought scarce (PK). The first Fox Sparrow on 27 September was rather early (PP).

Contributors: Albert Berkowitz, Des Moines; Gladys Black, Pleasantville; Eldon Bryant, Akron; Joe Brown, Des Moines; John Faaborg, Jefferson; Mrs. Edwin Getscher, Hamburg; Donald Gillaspey, Lamoni; Mrs. Darrell Hanna, Sioux City; Russell Hays, Waterloo; Jim Keenan, Ogden; Fred Kent, Iowa City; Pearl Knoop, Marble Rock; Keith Layton, Oskaloosa; Peter Lowther, Ames; Mrs. Geneva Marsh, Sioux City; Ron Muilenburg, Webster City; Peter Petersen, Jr., Davenport. WOODWARD H. BROWN, 4815 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50312.

## GENERAL NOTES



THE GREAT GRAY OWL - IN IOWA?--An early morning haze still hung heavy along the river as we crossed the bridge and made a right turn on the gravel road that follows the Iowa river near the small town of Quarry. It was about five-thirty on a perfect mid-May morning; an ideal hour for a "birding" jaunt. My twelve year old daughter, sitting in the car by my side, had already proven her sensitivity and accurateness as a true birder. We had enjoyed several early morning hours together that spring, arising at five to return home again by seven-thirty in time to catch the school bus. Our bird life-list had increased considerably that year. I had begun my list in 1956 and now, three years later, I was about to add one of the real rarities!

Having the privilege of being in close association with several avid bird enthusiasts as well as two well-recognized bird authorities of our mid-west area, gave me opportunity to learn much beyond that which I eagerly read in books and magazines on the fascinating subject of birds. Roger-Tory Peterson's FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS EAST OF THE ROCKIES was my chief reference book those years and without it this particular May morning I could not have been so sure of the validity of our identification. By 7:30 A.M. this May 12, 1959, we were to return home with 36 species of birds on our list, all seen within a two hour period and the prize of them all was the Great Gray Owl!

He sat tall on a wooden fence-post about a rod to the right side of the road. The slow approach of my car as I turned the curve after leaving the bridge did not startle him and as I slowly brought the car to a stop and turned off the motor, he remained entirely motionless. I knew immediately we were witnessing a very rare sight. This was no common owl! I was well acquainted with the Barred Owl, the only other owl an amateur might confuse with the larger Great Gray Owl. We were in such close range of this magnificent bird that the use of binoculars was hardly necessary for identification, yet with the glasses one could more clearly see the large yellow eyes and beak, the black chin marking and the very large prominent facial disks. His smooth round head and unusually long tail were additional marks for identification, as were the heavy length-wise stripes of his under-body. He was sitting in a perfect position for a thorough



study of his markings. It was unbelievable that we were actually in the presence of this handsome owl, considered rare even in his natural habitat.

He stayed in the motionless position for a good ten minutes, during which time my daughter and I were checking and re-checking our bird guide against our prize specimen. The book so explicitly stated that this largest of all owls is a rare Northerner whose range did not include Iowa; yet, here he was within forty feet of our car, looking straight at us and giving us the rare privilege of studying his lovely plumage and fascinating facial markings for a good ten minutes! I felt a surge of joy overwhelming me, so awesome was the sight of this creature. How I longed to be sharing this moment with my birding friends, as much for the opportunity to establish positive proof to them of my "find" as to share my discovery. I questioned if they would believe my wonderful story.

I held not the slightest doubt of our identification, in spite of the descriptive paragraph in the bird-guide, which made no mention of the Great Gray Owl visiting Iowa. I remembered my ornithologist friends' statement that "the book doesn't always hold the final information" and that one of the most exciting facets of the bird-watching hobby is the constant anticipation of seeing the totally unexpected in previously un-reported places.

When this beautiful bird decided he had accommodated us sufficiently, he suddenly lifted his huge wings and flew off toward tall trees lining the river bank. His wing spread appeared to be at least four feet, or more, as he swooped low to the ground before lifting himself higher into the trees and out of our sight. The view of that majestic bird flying was almost as exciting as seeing him in a perched position! We were reluctant to see him leave, yet fully aware of our good fortune of having him remain long enough for such thorough study.

My birding friends were going to hear an exciting "bird" tale as soon as I could reach my phone. I wondered if they would think it only the typical "fish tale" often jokingly told by fisherman? But this bird story was no "bird tale", nor was it a joke; It really happened!

The two recognized bird authorities I refer to were: Mrs. J. Ray King of Grundy Center and Mrs. John Barlow in Cedar Falls, both now deceased. Both of them encouraged me to report my story to a wild-life publication, which I have failed to do prior to this date. Dr. Martin Grant, on the staff at University of Northern Iowa, has suggested I submit it now. Homer Rinehart, a licensed bird-bander, and Mrs. Roy Grimes, both of Marshalltown, are among those acquaintances of which I speak. LUCILE E. MITCHEM, R.R. #2, Marshalltown.

OH! THE TOUCH OF WINGS--I am not a bird bander but call myself a bird assistant or a bird watcher. My husband is a fisherman. When he made me put my worms on the hook, I gave up trying to become a fisherman, bought myself a pair of binoculars, and became a bird watcher. Oh yes, I kept a list and spent most of my time looking at the bird book trying to identify what I saw. It helped though to pass the time while my husband fished.

And then one day I met the Bird Lady and my list grew and grew. She taught me to find them by their song. We never would have found the Prothonotary Warbler or the Cerulean Warbler had not the Bird Lady heard a song she had never heard before.

The Bird Lady puts on the strangest looking garb and now I look like her, too, for we hop over fences, jump over running water in creeks, and wade

through swampy places. She takes me through brushy places and our jackets and slacks become covered with strange objects. The Birdy Lady has her own names for them. She calls them beggars lice, sand burs, and stick tights. I never to get them all removed and I'm liable to see strange burs on my sofa, floors and chairs. The Bird Lady says that burs and dirty boots are the trade mark of bird watchers.

This last October she said I could become her chief assistant when she would be banding migrating birds. A farmer had no cattle in a certain brushy pasture all summer and many weeds had flourished with the plentiful supply of moisture in June. The farmer had given the Bird Lady permission to put up her mist nets. A big wild hemp patch mixed with a rank growth of pigweeds made an ideal place to set up two nets. The weed patch sloped down to the bank of a meandering creek where smartweeds grew at the water's edge.

The weeds of the wild hemp are made into the drug marijuana and the Governor of our state says this weed should be eradicated. Perhaps the leaves are not good for man, but for the American Goldfinch the seed of the wild hemp is tops. We banded one hundred eight-six goldfinches in that weed patch! A multiflora rose fence near a small red cattle shed made an ideal place for migrating sparrows to congregate and from here they would fly directly into the nets in the weed patch.

On Tuesdays my bridge club meets. How can I ever explain to them how we catch these birds to band? They've never seen a twelve meter mist net and they wouldn't understand. Anyhow it was hard to bid four hearts when my heart was beating to be off in a weed patch with the Bird Lady. And of course, that was the afternoon she got the unusual bird in her net. Here is how she related the experience to me.

She said checking the nets, she found one net alive with birds. There were some of the usual ones that we had been banding such as the Fox, Harris', White-crowned, White-throated, Savannah, and Swamp Sparrows, and of course, many goldfinches. But at the farthest end of the net was a tiny sparrow that did not look familiar. So by-passing all the other birds, she came to the end of the net and there was a Le Conte's Sparrow, the first one of that species she had ever banded.

The Bird Lady felt sorry for me in town bidding those hearts so she put the Le Conte's Sparrow in a carrying cage and brought it into town. What a beautiful sparrow to hold in my hand and to be able to study the pink scarf around his neck and to see all the gold feathers around his eye and breast at such a close range!

How can I ever explain to my golf playing friends that play bridge every Tuesday what fun it is to be a bird bander's assistant? The Bird Lady said we could expect to be called queer. She said often cartoons were drawn of bird watchers. She said she remembered one cartoon where a man was standing at the edge of a woods looking through his binoculars when two hunters with guns came along. They were looking for pheasants and quail. One hunter pointing to the bird watcher said, "Look at that guy. Nuts like that scare me. It ain't normal!" "Yeah," said the other hunter, "and he just looks at them, and then writes something down in a little book." "It is un-American!"

And then the Bird Lady said, "Now those friends of yours that play golf. Don't they look crazy chasing a little white ball all over that green field in the hot sun? You see there are so many more of them than there are of us bird



watchers. At least when the sun is hot we take to the cool shade of the woods and listen to a Red-eyed Vireo and Indigo Bunting sing."

One day in October - I guess it was October 10, 1967, the Bird Lady was so excited because she had three Dickcissels in her net. I couldn't see why this was so exciting. Hadn't we seen Dickcissels this summer on every telephone pole about every mile in the country?

"But this is October 10!" she exclaimed. "Dickcissels are never seen this late." She was always explaining to me that bird banding was not a hobby. That she was contributing data to science.

Oh, there is so much to learn, I've found out. I used to spend so much time searching in that bird book of mine. I thought now that I had met the Bird Lady I could leave the book at home. But no, she said to keep it in my pocket. That one never gets too old or wise to learn something new. We often stop and look at the book, especially when studying hawks and owls.

This fall when we got a towhee I couldn't find him in my bird book. The Bird Lady said the reason was because it was the western form of the Rufous-sided Towhee. She was quite elated to get that one here in Iowa. She said I would need Peterson's WESTERN FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS to find a picture of this towhee. In his attire he closely resembles the towhee of the East, but has an extra ornament, a sprinkling of white on his back and wings, which makes him look as though he had thrown a gauzy mantle of silver across his shoulders.

When the banding began to taper off in the weed patch, the Bird Lady moved one net into the timber. She wanted to get a Hairy Woodpecker and a Brown Creeper for her 1967 list. She had left me in the weed patch to take the many goldfinches out of the nets. We had checked the net in the timber twice and found nothing. This time she said she was going to take the net down.

I began to wonder why she didn't come back. When she did she was carrying several nylon bags with birds. I could see she was plenty excited! I just knew she had something she had never banded before. She told me I could have three guesses.

"Redpoll?" I asked, for this one I had hoped we would get when we were netting all those goldfinches. "Short-billed Marsh Wren," I guessed. When I walked along the bank of the creek, I had flushed Swamp and Lincoln, and Song Sparrows from the smartweeks, and once I had seen this marsh wren. "Not a Carolina Wren!" I exclaimed as she held up the nylon bag. The Bird Lady said as she was taking a very complaining Hairy Woodpecker out of the net, she saw at her feet a small brown bird with a stripe through its eye. The weight of so many birds caused the net to sag and here lay a wren buried in the brown oak leaves. What should she do? Wrens could so easily go through a net and escape. Should she drop the noisy woodpecker? She quickly found a nylon bag and stacked him safely away and dropped down to the wren. It was a Carolina Wren all right. She could hardly wait to get all the other birds out of the net and get back to the weed patch to show me the wren.

Had we not chased a Carolina Wren this spring along the bank of the creek listening to him sing and sing, only to get a fleeting glimpse as he dashed through the foliage of the deep woods? Now at last I had him in my hand to study his rufous-red plumage as long as I pleased.

Our bird banding friends from Hamburg just happened to stop and luckily they had a camera with them so now we have a slide to record our memorable



experience of banding the Carolina Wren, a rare species in this section of the state. (Editor's note: The author of the article is the Bird Lady written through the eyes of the bird assistant.) MRS. W. C. DELONG, Box 298, Shenandoah.

HOW AND WHY I BEGAN BIRD WATCHING--Before bird watching I had, I thought, plenty of hobbies, but my wife had few or none. I enjoyed bowling, hunting, golf and softball, something for every season. Then my wife saw the ad for Adult Education and wanted to do something different for a change. She decided on bird watching and started a campaign to get me to go to class with her for support and a ride to and from class. Like a lot of people I felt that bird watching was a hobby for old maids and odd balls. In the end I agreed to go with my wife because I felt guilty since I had so many hobbies and Betty had none.

The first class was pretty much as I expected, 99% women, mostly older. The class was both interesting and promising so I felt much better. The fact that I was the only man in class was slightly disturbing but soon all was well, the women were very friendly and easy to talk to. The first class also promised field trips which sounded good. The first field trip was to Gladbrook Lake on a very cold and rainy day. I was poorly dressed for the day but enjoyed every minute. I nearly froze and caught a terrible cold that lasted for weeks. Along with that cold I also caught birding fever, from which there is no relief.

Then, too, we were keeping bird lists and it became like a game to win. There were no prizes for birds or for the longest list, but still it was like a game to be played to win. It was like reading license plate numbers; once the game started I couldn't stop. Every place I went I was looking for or at birds. Traveling about 100 miles a day, I had plenty of time to watch for birds and usually I did.

Betty and I were soon spending most of our time traveling around the back roads of Marshall County. Having hunted a great deal I knew a lot of back roads and could keep from getting lost. Before bird watching I usually slept late on Saturday, but this ended and in its place came very early rising like 6:00 A.M. drives into the countryside, looking for birds. I never knew there were so many birds with different names so close to home.

The people that we met both in class and on field trips were very nice people. There were no odd balls. I believe, on a whole, they are mostly educated people who are interesting and entertaining. They are people you like to call friends. These people are mostly like yourself, interested in birds and trying to learn more. They are different than most of my other friends, but that is good. Variety is always welcome and good.

Once the first class was over I was hooked. Even though the class was graduated, the education went on and on. All summer long we bird watched. In the fall there was a new class and there was never a doubt but what we would be there. The new class brought more new friends. The field trips were always fun and interesting. They were planned but very, very flexible.

I am very happy that my smart wife talked me into joining birding, it is different, fun and very educational. I hope to continue from now on. It is a never ending sport. There is always a new bird to be seen. Along with the birds I get to see beautiful countryside that I had seen before but seldom enjoyed as much as I do now. ED SAVAGE, Marshalltown.

THE OLD SWIMMING HOLE FOR THE BIRDS--We live in the woods between High and Ingham Lakes in Emmet County. A wonderful "binding" place and hiking place, but very few people make use of it. We have two narrow lanes up to our house from County B blacktop. Both lanes have trees on either side with undergrowth of plum, gooseberry bushes, raspberry, and creeper vines almost up to the driving path and we see many birds as we drive in and out, but when we drive or walk the birds fly into the brush where we cannot see them.

In one land was a puddle of water in a small depression or wheel track and we noticed many birds came in to that water to drink and splash, but if we drove the car or walked we couldn't get very close to them, so we drove the car down to about twenty or twenty-five feet from this water puddle and parked there. It was not long until birds came, not only to the water hole but in the bushes close to the car. We really had a "feast". The birds we enjoyed the most were Goldfinches, several at a time; Yellowthroat; Yellow and Blackpoll Warblers; and most of all the Indigo Bunting.

These are just a few of the birds we saw at close range and we wished more bird interested people could have enjoyed this with us. Many species were missed this year. We saw more Blackpolls and Redstarts than we usually see. The rare birds for us were the Osprey (April 17); Red-breasted Merganser (April 23); Golden Plovers (May 9); Semipalmated Plover (May 9) and Blackburnian Warbler (May 18). C. F. WOLDEN, Wallingford.

WILSON'S PHALAROPES NESTING IN NORTHWEST IOWA.--During June 1968, two nests of Wilson's Phalarope (*STEGANOPUS TRICOLOR*) were found in Clay and Palo Alto counties near Ruthven, Iowa. The nests were found while conducting field research sponsored by the National Science Foundation Undergraduate Research Participation Program.

The two Wilson's Phalarope nests were located approximately one mile apart in quite different habitats. The first nest was found on 2 June on a state-owned prairie known as Dewey's Pasture in Clay County. The next was situated in bluegrass (*POA PRATENSIS*) about 30 feet from the edge of a dry marsh of *CAREX* sp. It consisted of a depression in the ground lined with bluegrass. On 18 June, the second nest (Fig. 1) was found in Palo Alto County at another state-owned area called the Oppedahl Tract. This nest was situated on a mud-flat overgrown with beggars tick (*BIDENS* sp.). It lacked a well-formed nest bowl although dense *Bidens* surrounding the nest provided protection for the eggs and the incubating bird.

Both nests were rechecked to determine their fate and complete clutch size. The upland nest was found accidentally destroyed by man on 6 June; the nest located on the mud flat hatched successfully by 1 July. Both nests contained four eggs.

According to Grant (*IOWA BIRD LIFE*, 33:p. 56), the Wilson's Phalarope is now considered an uncommon migrant in Iowa although it formerly nested in northern Iowa. DuMont (*A REVISED LIST OF THE BIRDS OF IOWA*, 1933; p. 75) reported the Wilson's Phalarope as a former summer resident, breeding in the northern part of Iowa. The A. O. U. CHECKLIST (1957: p. 211) indicates the





FIGURE 1

southernmost breeding areas in the Midwest is central Minnesota and Wisconsin. Apparently, the nests reported here are the first found since Anderson (1904) described Wilson's Phalarope nests in northern Iowa (PROCEEDINGS OF THE DAVENPORT ACADEMY OF SCIENCES 11:212-213). -- ROBERT D. BERGMAN, LOREN C. BATES and DAVID K. VOIGTS, Department of Zoology and Entomology, Iowa State University, Ames.

## BOOK REVIEWS



**WATERFOWL, THEIR BIOLOGY AND NATURAL HISTORY**--Paul A. Johnsgard-University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln--138 p., 148 photographs, 59 in color--1968--\$8.95.

A very well done broad discussion of the general biology of this order. Included are sections on distribution, migration, ecology, behavior, vocalization, breeding, molts, evolution and hybridization as well as an essay on the future of waterfowl. An identification key and annotated list of waterfowl of the world



round out the text. The photographs are very excellent, illustrating essentially all species of waterfowl. Many of these were taken at the Wildfowl Trust in England by the author. The bibliography is well selected and grouped by chapter headings. The quality of the printing and reproduction of the photographs is excellent. Hunters with a deep interest in waterfowl and serious bird students will find this book of great merit. Public and college libraries should certainly secure this volume. Its readability makes it of special value to any naturalist. ed.

ANTARCTIC BIRD STUDIES--Oliver L. Austin, Jr., Editor--American Geophysical Union, Washington, D. C.--262 p., many photographs, tables and charts--1968--\$16.50.

This volume is a part of the Antarctic Research Series, which presents reports of research done in the Antarctic which are, for the most part, too lengthy for inclusion in standard journals. The bird studies contribution to this series is a group of eight papers. The first paper deals with the breeding cycles and biology of the Great Albatross. The second covers the avifauna of Haswell Island, a tiny island just off the eastern tip of the continent. Five papers deal with various aspects of the physiology and behavior of the Adelie Penguin. The last paper summarizes the activities and results of the United States Antarctic Research Program bird banding activities. This book is a very valuable addition to our knowledge of bird life on the most difficult continent for birds to inhabit. It will doubtlessly provide a good basis for future ornithological investigations and should be available in any good reference library. ed.

I LIVE WITH BIRDS--HANCE ROY IVOR--Follett Publishing Co., Chicago and New York--172 p., 70 photographs, seven in color--1968--\$5.95.

The author, a Canadian, has devoted forty years of his life to caring for and studying birds. He lives at Windinglane Bird Sanctuary, about twenty miles from Toronto. This book is a collection of stories written about his bird friends and their behavior. Ivor was able to tame many species and learned many interesting things about them. It could be argued that he has overly humanized birds, but after reading of his experiences this is a difficult point to maintain. If you have ever cared for orphaned or injured birds you can certainly learn much from the experiences of this man. ed.

WILDFOWL DECOYS--Joel Barber--Dover Publications, New York--156 p., 140 plates with 4 in color--1954--\$3.00 paperbound.

Not a new Dover reprint but one which has never been reviewed in IOWA BIRD LIFE. Decoys have long been considered beyond the realm of interest of bird watchers. However, today they are being used with increasing frequency in interior decorating. With the advent of decoys made of moulded plastic the carved decoy of the past becomes an art form with a value which exceeds its practicality. This well illustrated volume deals with the history, place in American culture, variety, construction and use of decoys. The birder interested in decoys should also be aware that an international exhibit of decoys and wood carving is presented every August at Davenport in connection with the Mississippi Valley Fair. ed.

THE WAY BIRDS LIVE--EDWARD A. ARMSTRONG--Dover Publications, New

York--97 p., 30 photographs, 42 drawings--1967--\$1.50 paperbound.

A reprint of Armstrongs book on bird behavior. While the original text was written twenty-five years ago it is basically sound. The author discusses courtship, mating, nestbuilding, care of the young, feeding, migration, the role of song, displays, and fighting. For the novice birder there are helpful hints on how to observe and photograph birds and record their behavior. The many photographs and drawings well illustrate many behavior patterns. This book would be especially good for high school libraries. ed.

THE AUDUBON ILLUSTRATED HANDBOOK OF AMERICAN BIRDS--Edgar M. Reilly, Jr.--McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York--524 p., 410 photographs, 35 in color, 100 drawings--1968--\$19.95 until Dec. 31, 1968 then \$25.00.

A well written source book of information of North American birds. Very reminiscent of Garden City's BIRDS OF AMERICA at first glance. However, upon a more careful perusal, the depth of the text soon becomes apparent. For a book of its size very little superfluous material is included. The species accounts contain details on appearance, voice, range, status, habitat, general biology, migration and other movements. In the case of some accidental species these accounts are short and contain primarily a description and range. The book is large, but the double column layout permits the inclusion of even more data than one would expect. The photographs on the whole are very fine and represent the work of our leading wildlife photographers. The reproduction of the color photographs is above average.

This volume is certainly not for field use. It is a reference book providing additional information and furnishing a source for even more detailed data. Many of these references are quite current. The printing and binding quality are excellent. The book is hard to fault from the view of the general reader, but some plates show birds enlarged to over life-size and the author's choice of words is occasionally questionable.

Any library, public or private, would be enhanced with the addition of this volume. In addition, if your order is placed with the I. O. U. the society will benefit also. Simply send in the coupon below with your check for your copy. ed.

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